



MAYORAL SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

10th October 2006

MM7 SUPP	CSIRO'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE
FILE: *	EAG {Folio No. *} }

SUMMARY:

An opportunity has arisen for Kempsey Shire Council to become part of a Sustainable Communities project in conjunction with the CSIRO. This could fit well with our proposal to engage our community more fully with council's future planning, and enable us to be more 'opportunity ready' when proposals are brought forward by both governments and the private sector. The proposal is strongly supported by MDAP. See [Appendix A](#)



DESCRIPTION:

CSIRO, a prestigious national research organisation, have developed an intensive and extensive community engagement model, and are seeking appropriate areas for the program's implementation. CSIRO's Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) is essentially a methodology/framework for community engagement and capacity building, resulting in a broad commitment to plans, priorities and innovative solutions. The SCI has been trialled with success in other areas.

The Kempsey LGA is included in the Federal Government's Sustainable Regions (SR) program, and there is a possibility of SR co-funding for a Sustainable Communities Initiative in the Macleay Valley. In anticipation of local support the MNCRDB has lodged an Expression of Interest for SR funding (being considered today). The SR EOI envisages the Macleay Valley SCI program will extend over 15 months from late 2006 to mid 2008, at a total cost of around \$300,000. CSIRO will oversee the program and commission specialist consultants to facilitate the consultation and network development activities. SR funding for half of the cost is being sought (\$150,000), with the remainder to be made up by various sponsors/partners (including KSC?).

This program will be a major high-profile community-wide development initiative that will need enthusiastic and widespread local support. It will lead to fundamental change in the way authorities deal with communities, and in communities' attitude towards their own responsibilities, authority and participation. It will give communities an increased capability to define, express and pursue their collective interests through future funding programs.

Outcomes will include:

- the establishment of resilient common-interest networks
- the development of action plans for specific project activities
- the publication of information on options and opportunities
- the clear articulation of the principles and values that underpin collaboration within the community and with Local Government (eg respect for differing views, determination of majority views, balancing competing interests, governance, accountability, transparency etc)

ACTION REQUIRED

Kempsey Shire Council needs to decide whether it feels the CSIRO's Sustainable Communities Initiative is appropriate and timely, and if so whether it is willing and able to participate in the program as a funding partner. A suggested Council contribution of \$50,000, ie \$4000 per month over the term of the project is proposed.

MNCRDB and MNCACC have to convince both CSIRO and Sustainable Regions Program (and other sponsors) of the merits of the proposal. Both bodies will need to be satisfied there is a high level of local support

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

The project would enable Council to be in a position to apply for additional grant funding to progress our planning programme which impacts on environmental matters.

- *Social*

The project has major implications on how we engage our community and greatly enhances community participation in community activities. Significant community development applications

- *Economic*

(Financial)

Initial cost would be in the order of \$4000 per month over the 15 months time frame of the project. However the long term financial implications are significant. Being "opportunity ready" would enable council to take better advantage of financial and economic opportunities when they present.

- *Policy or Statutory*

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council support the proposal and apply to become part of the Sustainable Communities project as a partner with the CSIRO.

That Council allocate \$4000 per month (\$50,000) for 15 months as its financial contribution.

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E A Green
MAYOR